

HB 0021, Child Influencers Protection Act.pdf

Uploaded by: Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Position: FAV

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary

Chair, Ways and Means Committee

Low House Office Building, Room 131

6 Bladen Street

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for HB 0021, Child Influencers Protection Act

Dear Chair Atterbeary,

Maryland Latinos Unidos respectfully submits strong support for House Bill 0021, the Child Influencers Protection Act. HB 0021 is before the House Ways and Means Committee during the 2026 Legislative Session and addresses the growing use of children in monetized online content without adequate legal protections.

HB 0021 establishes requirements to protect minors who appear in monetized digital media, including provisions related to compensation, recordkeeping, and the safeguarding of a child's financial and personal interests. As digital platforms increasingly drive income generation, children are often placed at the center of content creation without the labor protections that exist in more traditional industries.

Latino and immigrant families are disproportionately affected by gaps in digital labor protections. Many families turn to social media and online platforms as supplemental or primary income sources due to wage instability, language barriers, or limited access to traditional employment. Children in these households may appear frequently in monetized content, sometimes without clear consent standards or long term financial safeguards.

HB 0021 promotes dignity, safety, and economic fairness for children by recognizing their labor and ensuring that earnings generated through their participation are preserved for their benefit. Protecting minors from financial exploitation and overexposure is especially critical for families navigating economic insecurity, where children may feel implicit pressure to contribute to household income.

The implications for Latino and immigrant communities are significant. This legislation affirms that economic opportunity should not come at the expense of child welfare. It also establishes guardrails that support healthy family decision making, protect children's futures, and reduce the risk of long term harm associated with unregulated digital labor. MLU can amplify these protections through family education, digital literacy initiatives, and advocacy that centers child well being in emerging technology spaces.

Maryland Latinos Unidos urges a favorable report on HB 0021. As digital economies evolve, Maryland must ensure that its laws evolve as well, placing children's rights and protections at the forefront.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Communications and Public Affairs Specialist

Maryland Latinos Unidos

corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org

HB21 SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Hicks

Position: FAV

Written Testimony in Support of HB21

TO: Members of the House Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Jennifer Hicks

Date: 2.2.2026

RE: SUPPORT for HB21 - Social Media Platforms - Vloggers and Video Content Featuring Minors (Child Influencers Protection Act)

I am writing to express strong support for HB21, the Child Influencers Protection Act. This is a bill that addresses a critical gap in our current labor laws by ensuring that children are afforded the same financial protections and rights as traditional child entertainers in the event that their images/lives are used to generate profit on social media. "Vlogging" has now grown to become a significant industry but the current laws do not reflect its increased stature; too many children have no legal guarantees over any of the revenue generated based on their likeliness. This bill fixes this by doing the following:

1. Ensuring fair compensation - a portion of a vlogger's profits must be set aside into a trust for the featured child.
2. Applying labor standards - mandates work or special permits for minors who are featured in this capacity.
3. "The Right to be Forgotten" - this will empower adults who were featured in content as children to request permanent deletion of that content from social media platforms.
4. Closing legal loopholes - this addresses the current exemption that allows parents or guardians to avoid compensating children for work performed in a family-owned business.

I do not believe this bill would result in government overreach; families will still be able to produce content about their own lives. I believe this will ensure that when that sharing becomes a commercial enterprise, the children will not be exploited for their labor. By requiring formal permits, Maryland can lead the way in protecting the financial and personal interests of the next generation of digital creators, without exploitation and future litigation amongst families.

I urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB21 to ensure our labor laws keep pace with the realities of the modern digital economy.

Respectfully,
Jennifer Hicks
5382 Fallriver Row Ct
Columbia, MD 21044

Testimony in support of HB0021 - Social Media Plat

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

HB0021_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

02/03/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0021- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Social Media Platforms - Vloggers and Video Content Featuring Minors (Child Influencers Protection Act)

TO: Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian and members of the Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0021, **Social Media Platforms - Vloggers and Video Content Featuring Minors (Child Influencers Protection Act)**

The rapid growth of internet videos, called vlogs requires new laws to control the phenomenon. As defined by the Oxford Dictionary a vlog is “a personal website or social media account where a person regularly posts short videos.”

In some cases, vloggers have minor children in their vlogs. This bill seeks to protect minors from being exploited because it will require a vlogger who creates video content that is posted on a social media platform and features a certain child to compensate the child under certain circumstances. It will force removal of content online that is found to contain minors by establishing requirements on social media platforms relating to deleting video content featuring minor children. It will also add the child labor laws requirements by applying certain requirements relating to the labor of minors to children compensated by vloggers.

As report by multistate.us: ¹

Key Takeaways:

- Sixteen states have introduced legislation requiring trust accounts for minor content creators' earnings, following pioneering laws in Illinois, Minnesota, and California that established protections for young influencers in the digital economy.
- State laws are modeled after California's historic Coogan Law from 1939, which protected child actors' earnings, with recent updates expanding coverage to include modern content creators and social media influencers.
- Takedown procedures vary significantly by state, with Utah placing responsibility on creators, Arkansas splitting duties between platforms and creators, and Montana focusing on platform-centric requirements for content removal.
- Legislative momentum has accelerated following high-profile cases of family vloggers exploiting children, highlighting concerns about consent, compensation, and the physical and mental well-being of minors featured in online content.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0021.

¹ <https://www.multistate.us/insider/2025/6/25/protecting-young-influencers-new-laws-protect-content-creators-that-are-minors>

HB21_SWASC_VLOGGER_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: UM SWASC

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL HOUSE BILL 21

Social Media Platforms - Vloggers and Video Content Featuring Minors (Child Influencers Protection Act)

Economic Matters
February 4, 2026

Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly supports HB0021, which will mandate a vlogger to deposit financial compensation into a trust fund for a minor the vlogger has featured in a monetized video content, posted on social media platform(s). This is an overdue step forward in protecting the safety of minors in a digital space.

The explosion of social media in recent times has revolutionized income generation, creating diverse and accessible revenue streams. “Sharenting” (sharing intimate family moments publicly online) has become increasingly common as social media platforms like YouTube, Tik Tok, Instagram, and Facebook provide financial compensation to monetized accounts.¹ A parent or guardian with a smartphone can take a picture or video of their child and have it online for viewing almost instantaneously. In some online spaces this has evolved into “family vlogging”: regularly sharing recorded information about a person's family specifically to engage viewers and, in many cases, earn revenue. Some of these accounts are operated by families and guardians who feature their minor children in the creation of video content for mass consumption and thus compensation.

Since compensation amounts are designed to increase with an increase in the amount of content and viewership, some of these families can earn significant amounts of financial compensation for their posted content – without the consent of or benefit to the child. In many instances, especially when the minor becomes the main attraction of views, they also then become the focus of the content. Some children are in the public eye almost from the moment of their birth, and remain so constantly afterward. The children involved in these videos simply by virtue of their age are unable to give informed consent and often unable to have a say in how they are represented. Even when a child is old enough to become cognizant of the risks of a digital footprint and begin advocating for themselves, that child is still ultimately dependent on the adults in their family. As Dr. Robyn Koslowitz puts it, “how does a child refuse consent to the very person they rely on for survival?”²

HB 21 creates protection for minors who are involved in digital content creation and revenue generation by mandating that a percentage of the earnings they help to generate be set aside in trust, accessible to the minor once they become an adult. This is similar to the California Child Actor's Bill, which was originally passed in 1939 as a response to a situation in which child actor Jackie Coogan found that all of his earnings were gone before he had a chance to make use of them. That money legally belonged to his parents, who had spent it. The bill has since been updated several times, most notably in 2024, when Governor Gavin Newsom signed into effect a revision that edited the bill to include child

¹ Reilly, M. (2023, January 18). Family Vlogging: Blurring the Line Between Parent and Employer. The Science Survey. <https://thesciencesurvey.com/editorial/2023/01/18/family-vlogging-blurring-the-line-between-parent-and-employer/>

² Koslowitz, R. (2025, February 11). The Slippery Slope of Sharenting | Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/targeted-parenting/202502/the-slippery-slope-of-sharenting>

social media influencers and content creators.³ Crucially, it included child influencers that are featured

in monetized content but not under contractual obligation, meaning that children who are being posted online by their parents or guardians but under no 'formal' work agreement are still afforded protections. Unfortunately, Maryland has so such provisions to protect to minors from being exploited in this way, and **minors featured in these money-making contents are sometimes compelled to endless hours of filming social media content to maximize capital for their parents or guardians. This is usually at no legally required financial compensation of their own, as was the case with The Squad.**⁴

Child influencers are not only at risk of financial exploitation: they are also at risk of abuse. The horror stories of child actors such as McCaulay Culkin and Jennette McCurdy often include adults that are domineering, emotionally controlling, manipulative and even sexually abusive. Moreover, children are unable to fully comprehend the long-term implications of vlogging. Thus, they are unable to provide informed consent for their lives to be filmed and brandished on global social media platforms for millions around the world to watch and judge critical aspects of their emotional, physical and social development. Personal medical, academic and emotional milestones or struggles can be made public knowledge, repackaged as a funny post or a teachable moment without the child's consent. **Capturing kids at their most embarrassing and vulnerable moments exposes them to emotional harm, reputational damage and a loss of control over their personal stories.**⁵ These digital footprints of their lives continue to exist on global platforms for continuous viewing, even after they have become adults and may want to revoke their existence.

The 8 Passengers YouTube Channel (now deleted) is a recent example. Created by Ruby Franke, at the height of its popularity it boasted over two million subscribers, making it lucrative enough to become Franke's full time job and require the formation of an LLC.⁶ She documented in detail her life and interactions with her six children, including disciplinary interactions, essentially amassing the evidence that would later result in her 2024 conviction on six counts of felony child abuse.⁷

Not all cases are as shocking as 8 Passengers, this is true. However, even when a parent or guardian has only the best of intentions toward their child, sharing so much information about them publicly can cause them harm. Leaving that information vulnerable invites bad actors to take and use it for their own purposes. All that is needed to 'doxx' a person (discover and reveal all of their private information, such as address, phone numbers, and other sensitive data) is a single data point, and family vloggers routinely provide far more than that. **HB 21 seeks to give child influencers more power over their digital footprint by allowing them to request deletion of content when they reach the age of majority.**

³ California, S. of. (2024, September 26). Governor Newsom joins Demi Lovato to sign legislation to protect the financial security of child influencers. Governor of California. <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2024/09/26/governor-newsom-joins-demi-lovato-to-sign-legislation-to-protect-the-financial-security-of-child-influencers/>

⁴ Lentz, K. (2025, April 9). *The dark side of kidfluencing true story: What was really going on behind the scenes of Tiffany Smith's content creation empire? People.* <https://people.com/the-dark-side-of-kidfluencing-true-story-11711886>

⁵ Ivey Communications. (2025, July 21). *Ivey studies kidfluencing: Harmless fun or child labour?* Western News. <https://news.westernu.ca/2025/07/ivey-research-kidfluencing/>

⁶ Graves, L. (2023, September 14). "8 Passengers" mom Ruby Franke received more than \$80K in PPP loans during pandemic, recor. <https://cbsaustin.com/news/nation-world/8-passengers-mom-ruby-franke-received-more-than-80k-in-ppp-loans-during-pandemic-propublica-loan-tracking-site-paycheck-protection-program-youtuber-influencer-child-abuse-charges>

⁷ Wendling, Mike. (2024, February 20). Ruby Franke: Parenting advice YouTuber given maximum sentence for child abuse. (2024, February 21). <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-68353302>



For more information, please contact
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Concerns have been raised about the practicality of this mandate. Can any hosting platform truly guarantee the media has been deleted when hundreds of saved copies could be floating around in online spaces over which they have no authority? Certainly, copies of the Franke 8 Passengers videos are out there, but they are no longer accessible on YouTube and, crucially, they are not being

recommended by the algorithm to new viewers and not generating any new revenue for Ruby Franke. Deletion of the media from its host platform, even if complete deletion from the internet cannot be guaranteed, is still a massive step forward and seems to be a reasonable thing to expect a company to be able to do.

HB0021 was introduced previously in some form in both 2024 and 2025, with neither making it past a first hearing. Prior testimony was robust and well-articulated, suggesting that this is an issue which many people have a vested interest in and which has perhaps been lost in the shuffle of the political landscape of the last few years. We urge the House to give HB0021 a look with fresh eyes and consider moving it forward, as several other states have done.⁸

Social Work Advocates for Social Change urges a favorable report on HB0021. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy, and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.

⁸ Miller, K. (2025, June 25). Protecting Young Influencers: New Laws Protect Content Creators That Are Minors | MultiState. <https://www.multistate.us/insider/2025/6/25/protecting-young-influencers-new-laws-protect-content-creators-that-are-minors>

pdf_[MD] HB 21_Vlogger_TechNet.pdf

Uploaded by: margaret durkin

Position: UNF

February 2, 2026

The Honorable Kris Valderrama
Chair
House Economic Matters Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
230 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 21 (Allen) - Social Media Platforms - Vloggers and Video Content Featuring Minors (Child Influencers Protection Act) – Unfavorable

Dear Chair Valderrama and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of TechNet, I'm writing to share comments on HB 21 on vloggers.

TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of the innovation economy by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and 50-state level. TechNet's diverse membership includes 104 dynamic American businesses ranging from startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents five million employees and countless customers in the fields of information technology, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, the sharing and gig economies, advanced energy, transportation, cybersecurity, venture capital, and finance.

A growing number of Americans are monetizing their accounts or content to take advantage of the vast economic opportunities that digital connectivity enables. Many companies are proud to build platforms that are empowering small businesses and the creator economy to thrive. As more creators are compensated for their content—by brand partners, platforms, or other revenue sources—it is important that they directly follow all laws and regulations governing labor law and taxation.

We appreciate the policy concerns this bill aims to address and support requirements to create trusts that compensate people who appeared in vlogs as minors once they turn 18. However, as drafted, HB 21 has the potential to sweep in vast numbers of people participating in the internet vlogging space. While some families use vlogging as a significant moneymaker, there are some minor children that are part of videos that make only cents on the dollar, and they don't intend to profit from online activities. This legislation would require any minor featured online to have a trust fund set up for them and a significant institutional effort for those minors who may only make nominal amounts.

The bill also requires that a minor featured in a vlog can request deletion of content at any point after becoming an adult. This requirement has the potential to cause implementation challenges and lead to unintended consequences. It is unclear how the deletion requirements would work and leaves many questions. The request to delete may work for content hosted by the platform, but it's much harder to stop individual users from sharing clips or videos if the content is already out in the public domain. How would a social media platform be able to establish that the minor-turned-adult was the one featured in the content? Another question to consider is whether there was more than one minor featured on a vlog, but only one makes the request – how would that request work? As an alternative, we suggest that deletion requirements be directed from a child to a parent, not from a child to a platform.

Creating a third-party right to delete for a user's content opens the door for bad actors to exploit our members' systems. For social media platforms to comply with this bill, they would have to collect even more information to verify someone's identity, which is in direct conflict with data minimization principles.

Social media platforms have a responsibility to protect users' privacy while balancing public interest and newsworthiness, and the bill does not include an exemption for such content. For example, vloggers could record content at a newsworthy event where the minor appears in an incidental manner with limited personal identifiable information involved, such as a partial face. This law would give platforms zero ability to keep up with critical reporting, as they do not exercise editorial actions for content on the platform.

Platforms aren't able to track all forms of monetization, such as branded partnerships or product placement. This bill could lead to frivolous information requests and create operational ambiguity for platforms, in addition to unreasonable expectations that platforms maintain such information. At a time when the creator economy is fueling economic growth, the law should avoid mandating conditions that lead to disincentives to create and share content, or worse, might lock some Americans out of these opportunities altogether.

Finally, we would like to clarify that nothing in this bill shall be construed to have any effect on a party that is neither the vlogger nor the child engaged in vlogging.

Illinois passed SB 1782 in 2023, which gives children who appear in online vlogs the ability to receive compensation from monetization of their likeness. Should the committee choose to move this bill, we encourage them to look to the Illinois model instead to address this issue.

TechNet's member companies prioritize the safety and digital well-being of children who access their sites and platforms. Our members strongly believe children deserve a heightened level of protection. TechNet members have been at the forefront of raising the standard for digital well-being across the industry by creating new features such as settings, parental tools, and protections that are age-appropriate, empower families to create the online experience that fits their needs,

and are tailored to the differing developmental needs of young people. For the reasons stated above, TechNet is opposed to HB 21. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Margaret Durkin

Margaret Durkin
TechNet Executive Director, Pennsylvania & the Mid-Atlantic